

Similarities of the people and the differences in their cultures



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As the popular saying goes, the world is a global village. Long gone are the days when given races were considered superior, the days of colonialism and racial indoctrination.

The force behind this is basically the internationalism and trans nationalism that is hastily becoming the order of the day. The many educational exchanges bring about an understanding that the skin color is the only difference among the different races. It is not right that the west has more clever people than the rest of the world. The major reason for the relative backwardness of the developing world is the inhuman exploitation of resources endowed on these lands. The exploitation took the form of land grabbing, slavery, indoctrination, and exploitation of natural resources for the capitalists' benefit.

As the whites were developing themselves industrially in the former years of exploitation, the poor colored people were busy providing cheap labor as slaves. When the going gets tough, so the saying goes, the tough get going. The people of the third world felt it was their time to emancipate themselves from the colonial yoke. Black consciousness became a strong movement all over the world, from the United States, to Europe, to Africa, Asia, and wherever else.

This is the time that the world started coming to the bitter realization that all are equal. Independence movements sprung up, with individuals like Dr Martin Luther King, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe among others coming up strongly in demand for equal treatment due to the fundamental similarities in all human beings. Prior to independence, there was the

indoctrination that subjects of colonialism were lesser beings. Plato, an ancient philosopher, divided the soul into three: Reason, Emotion, and Appetite. (Plato's theory of the Soul at http://www.essortment.com/all/platotheory_reym.htm)

In reference to Plato's division of the mind, Hegel argued that the white man was destined to lead and the black to be led because the latter has no reason. Hegel postulated that black Africa has no history of its own, that the history in Africa is about the white man in the continent. The League of Nations was the first most significant international organization to create a forum where world leaders would meet to deliberate on issues affecting the planet. This forum did not however recognize the similarity of the people of the globe.

After its tragic failure, the United Nations took over, appreciating to a relatively bigger extent the fundamental equality of the sons and daughters of the earth. Since then, the developing world has had some of their own at the helm of the world government. Globalization has brought to rest the debate on the lack of similarity in the world. Competition has become so stiff in the world to an extent that without international cooperation, no single country can see development. The threat of terrorism, for instance, has proven to all that no single society can claim to be safe. The drama on the September 11th, 2001 was a clear indication that no one is immune to terrorism.

Culture may be defined as the aggregate of a people's behavior in a given society. It encompasses all the activities that a people does, including the instruments used in their daily operations. In John H. Bodley's words, culture

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refers to: ...the patterns of behavior and thinking that people living in social groups learn, create, and share. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. It also distinguishes humans from other animals.

A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems. According to the foregoing, culture is a key player in human evolution. Human beings use their knowledge and rationality to determine their destiny, and not just the natural selection kind of living. Different parts of the world practice different cultures due to several factors including climatic conditions and the elements in the different climatic areas. Natural resources also play a big role alongside the ease of a given society to adopt some new culture through developing links with other cultures.

Culture, being the aggregate of a people's social life, may be interchangeably used with society. A group of people sharing similar cultural practices constitute a society. From the fore going, the different cultures of the world are closing together due to the technological advancement and the different cultural exchange practices. Educational exchange, for instance is one way of integrating different cultures.

Since culture is learnt and not hereditary, the social upbringing of an individual determines almost wholly the cultural orientation to be adopted by the said individual. Despite these, several other factors are at play in trying to strongly defend their cultures. In China, for instance, there is a strong desire by the authorities to gag the media, censoring all the informing to

make sure that what is relayed to the population is what the authorities desire. This system has been used by communist regimes to contain the spread of capitalism as a social and economic policy. It took the stepping down of Fidel Castro in Cuba for people to be allowed to own mobile phones and computers, thanks to his younger brother and successor, Raul Castro. A political system also constitutes culture.

The west has been an ardent advocate of western democracy, which is mostly liberal. It espouses a system of free market economy with the state having some limited regulatory role to play. Again, the west, and most notably the United States is craving to retain its hegemonic influence in the international arena. This was the case since the United States survived the cold war as the only superpower after the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics under Mikhail Gorbachev.

In conclusion therefore, as much as people are similar in many respects, the cultural differences are still distinct. At present it is almost impossible to find a pure culture, as most have been hybridized in the process of both inter and trans nationalism. The different cultures of the world will one dissipate to have one culture in one global village.